DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 237 924 CS 007 150

AUTHOR Zemmels, Elizabeth
TITLE Perris Valley Junior High School's Language Processing for Grades 7-10.
INSTITUTION Perris Union High School District, Sun City, CA.
PUB DATE Nov 82
NOTE 7p.; Golden Bell Award Winner.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Junior High Schools; *Language Processing; Logical Thinking; Problem Solving; Program Descriptions; *Reading Programs; Reading Skills; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS California (Perris); PF Project

ABSTRACT

An ongoing, interdisciplinary reading program for students in grades 7-10 in Perris Union High School District (California) is described. Initiated in 1979 as a result of low reading scores, the program divides all incoming seventh grade students into homogeneous groups. In the first 6 weeks of school these new groups meet once a day for 50 minutes to complete the Formula-Three Reading, Spelling, and Learning Program. Students learn word attack, problem-solving, and logical reasoning. Following this initial phase, groups rotate from teacher to teacher for 6-week blocks. No texts or packaged programs are used. Teachers adopt and create their own materials in order that students can apply the skills they acquired in phase 1. As students improve, they are promoted to higher level groups. Because all teachers participate in the program in rotating shifts, students benefit from a variety of teaching strategies, while teachers have the experience of working with all ability levels. Results of the program indicate that the initial class of seventh graders, whose reading level was an average of 2 years below norm, had raised their reading levels an average of 4 years during 3 years of the program. (LP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED237924

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elizabeth Zemmels

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Perris Valley Junior High School's

Language Processing for 7th - 10th Grades

CS 007150

Contact Person: Elizabeth Zemmels
Director of Special Projects

Perris Valley Junior High School
501 North "A' Street
Perris, CA 92370

PERRIS VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

One of the old sayings in education is that "Every teacher is a reading teacher." Whatever the main subject--history, drafting, or science--one big job of the teachers is to help the students unlock the knowledge stored in books, and reading is the key to books. In the Perris schools this saying has taken on a new and active life!

In September of 1979 the Perris Union High School District established a reading program called Language Processing for 7th through 10th grades. It was the district's number one priority, both philosophically and economically.

This program came into existence because administrators and teachers were concerned about the reading and language achievement of their students. An average entering seventh grader to the Perris Union High School District in 1979 was two years-one month below grade norm in reading and two years-three months below grade norm in language.

Additionally, the district covers about 250 square miles and in area is the third largest district in California. Five elementary districts send their students to the district's junior high school. Data from the California Assessment Program shows that the district is at the 86 percentile for minority students, at the 86 percentile for the student mobility; and at the 95 percentile for the AFDC (Aid for Dependent Children). In 1978-79 12th grade CAP scores placed students at the 4th percentile in reading. Test scores coupled with demographic factors provide a unique educational setting. The district leadership decided that the only way to improve their students' achievement was to make an all out commitment of the whole staff!

School-wide reading programs were researched to find one that was financially feasible and yet could be used by teachers from all content backgrounds,

both in a reading program and the content area. There was a need to focus in on students' reading abilities and provide a consistent base program so that they would have the tools to learn in all classes. Several schools were observed using the Formula-Three Language Processing Program and it was decided to adopt it for the Perris Union High School District.

A Reading Task Force of teachers and administrators was appointed during the summer of 1979 to develop the guidelines for the program. The Task Force is ongoing and continues to give direction to the program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

At the beginning of this program students at the Perris Valley Junior High School were assigned to homogeneous groups which met for 50 minutes every day during the same period. During the first phase of the program all teachers but three took a group through the entire Formula-Three Reading, Spelling, Learning Program course of instruction. Every student initially receives this six weeks of basic instruction which includes strategies for word attack, problem solving and logical reasoning. When this instruction is completed, the program moves into its second phase, with a new teacher. Thereafter, a formal packaged program is no longer used. In the second phase students utilize and internalize the skills acquired during the first phase using a variety of materials supplied by the teachers. Students rotate to new teachers every six weeks throughout the year. They read and process materials at the group's instructional level. As students improve they move up to more advanced groups where they read and process even more difficult reading materials.

The rotations serve two purposes. First, each teacher instructs several homogeneous groups of high, middle, and low ability during any school year.

This allows instructors to learn teaching strategies they can use with all levels of students in their assigned content areas. Second, all students benefit from every teacher's expertise. Since almost all instructors taught in the "language processing chain", they are able to infuse language processing strategies into the total curriculum.

An essential element of language processing is the stress on using the dynamics of group instruction. The individual students learn as a product of the group experience and at an accelerated rate since the group intellect permits the reading and processing of materials whose content and level of difficulty far exceeds that which most members of the group could read and comprehend individually.

In language processing classes students are arranged in a semicircle where teacher and students have constant eye contact. The group processes challenging materials with the teacher who exploits every opportunity for clarifying vocabulary, concepts and expanding levels of critical thinking. The purpose is to teach students how to clarify the information in the materials they are reading or discussing so they are able to understand it, evaluate it, learn it, store it, recall it, and use it.

The program design has evolved over the years due to district economic and growth variables, as well as grass root movements by faculty to make design revision to better meet the needs of students. The essential principles of language processing have been retained even under the changing conditions mentioned above.

There are no textbooks or packaged programs available for language processing. Teachers have to use their own creativity in utilizing materials from their area of expertise. For example, the art teacher processes art history, a home economics teacher processes consumer education, or the graphics

teacher processes humor in literature, his hobby.

Teaching materials are expensive but it was believed that the community could be an excellent resource for language processing materials. The need was publicized and as a result classroom sets of several leading magazines were collected. Kiwanis took on as a project the collection and delivery of materials to the school. Encylopedias and reference materials were donated also.

RESULTS

Students have accelerated their growth in reading at Perris Valley Junior High School. In the fall of 1979 entering 7th graders were on the average, two years and one month below grade norm in reading. The average growth during the first six years of school was 8.1 months per year in school causing students to slide farther behind each year. Those entering 7th graders grew three years and two months during three years in the program. Students who entered 7th grade in the fall of 1980 have grown two years and six months after two years in the program. After several years in the program students are closing the gap between where they are reading and where they should be.

GROWTH IN READING

Grade Level	Length of time students in program 1981-82	CTBS		CAT	
		1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
7	1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.0
8	2	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.4
9	3	*	.9	-0-	1.0
10	4	*	*	.2	1.1
11	1	*	*	-.3	1.6
12	2	*	*	.7	1.6

*No testing

At the senior high school where many students have been in the program since junior high school, growth has reached as high as one year and six months per school year. 1981-82 seniors who took language processing for only one year in 10th grade scored at the 31st percentile in the California Assessment

Program, a significant increase. 1980-81 seniors had one quarter of language processing in 11th grade on an experimental basis--and also showed significant growth in reading in the California Assessment Program.

READING PERCENTILES - CAP

1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
6	4	11	21	31

A special study has been made of 7th graders who entered the program in 1979-80. Of the 366 original 7th grade students 142 remained in the study at the end of their 9th grade. These students on the average show four years of growth in three years. 17% of the students were above 12.9 (the CAT test ceiling) so growth is actually even greater than four years.

Inservice has been provided to teachers mainly utilizing the district expertise that has developed over the three years of implementation. Teachers report that their students are beginning to show marked improvement in their abilities to comprehend textbook material, especially at the senior high school level because students have had sustained instruction in language processing.

It was predicted by Ted Vail, the innovator of the language processing concept, that the growth would be more pronounced after students were in the program for several years and that students would start to show no loss over the summer months. These prediction have come true.

Change takes time. The testing results show that the students are making accelerated progress in reading. The Perris Union High School staff believes that the impact of the language processing program, beginning with the 7th grade at Perris Valley Junior High School, is having a positive impact throughout the district. It has speeded up the acquisition of the necessary tools for learning. Intervention in learning and growth patterns at the secondary level is possible. The giant commitment and implementation of a language processing program is paying off in large dividends for our students.